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May 16, 2018

Los Angeles City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: PLUM Committee

Dear Honorable Members:

BENJAMIN CARRE RESIDENCE; 2754 NORTH WOODSHIRE DRIVE; CASE NO. CHC-2018-802-HCM, ENV-2018-803-CE

At its meeting of **May 3, 2018**, the Cultural Heritage Commission took the actions below to include the above-referenced property in the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments, subject to adoption by the City Council:

1. **Determined** that the proposed designation is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 and Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 of the State CEQA Guidelines;
2. **Determined** that the property conforms with the definition of a Monument pursuant to Section 22.171.7 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code;
3. **Recommended** that the City Council consider and designate the subject property a Historic-Cultural Monument; and
4. **Adopted** the attached findings as amended by the Commission.

This action was taken by the following vote:

Moved: Kennard
Seconded: Milofsky
Ayes: Barron, Buelna, Kanner

Vote: 5 – 0

Etta Armstrong, Commission Executive Assistant I
Cultural Heritage Commission

The Cultural Heritage Commission would appreciate your inclusion of the subject property to the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

Time for Council to Act The Commission action will be transmitted to the City Council for consideration. Pursuant to Section 22.171.10 (f) of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, the Council may approve or disapprove in whole or in part an application or initiation for a proposed designation of a Monument. The Council shall act in 90-days of the public hearing held before the Commission. The 90-day time limit may be extended by the Council for good cause for a maximum of 15 days. If the Council does not act on the application or initiation within this 105-days total time limit, the application or initiation to designate a Monument shall be deemed to have been denied. The Council may override a Commission recommendation of denial of Council initiated designation by a minimum of 10-votes.

Enclosures: Amended Findings

BENJAMIN CARRE RESIDENCE

FINDINGS

(Adopted by the Cultural Heritage Commission on May 3, 2018)

The Benjamin Carre Residence “reflects the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community” for its association with the development of Hollywoodland, one of Los Angeles’ earliest planned streetcar suburbs and one of Hollywood’s most prestigious neighborhoods catering to people working in the entertainment industry.

The Benjamin Carre Residence “is identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history” as the home of motion picture production designer and painter Benjamin Jules Carre that he designed for himself and his family.

The Benjamin Carre Residence “embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for study of a period, style or method of construction” as an excellent example of Mediterranean Revival style residential architecture.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Benjamin Carre Residence meets three of the Historic-Cultural Monument criteria.

The property “reflects the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, state, or community” for its association with the development of Hollywoodland, one of Los Angeles’ earliest planned streetcar suburbs and one of Hollywood’s most prestigious neighborhoods catering to people working in the entertainment industry. Starting in 1923, a five-member real estate syndicate that included Harry Chandler, Moses Hazeltine Sherman, and Eli P. Clark began to develop land in upper Beachwood Canyon into a Mediterranean Riviera filled with residential architecture inspired by France, Italy, and Spain. Taking advantage of the influx of automobiles, this was one of the first of many residential developments built in the Hollywood Hills. Construction of the original properties lasted until the stock market crash of 1929. Built in 1926 in the Mediterranean Revival style by a member of the film industry, the subject property is an excellent representation of the original Hollywoodland residential development.

The Benjamin Carre Residence “embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for study of a period, style, or method of construction” as an excellent example of Mediterranean Revival style residential architecture. Hallmarks of the style, as exhibited by the subject property, include a low-pitched red-tiled roof, arched windows, and plain stucco exterior walls. Other characteristic elements are the wood casement windows, eclectic combination of Art Deco stylistic features, and decorative shutters.

The Benjamin Carre Residence also “is identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history” as the home of motion picture production designer and painter Benjamin Jules Carre that he designed for himself and his family. Carre started his career doing scenic design work for the Paris Opera and London’s Covent Garden, and in 1906, he became a set designer for the Pathe-Gaumont film studio. In 1912 he began a successful collaboration with renowned director Maurice Tourneur at the Éclair/Peerless Film Corp. in Fort Lee, New Jersey. Moving to Los Angeles, he spent decades designing notable sets for significant movies, such as the subterranean chambers in *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925), the Emerald City in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), and the Smith family house in *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944). A founding member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, he also worked on *Don Juan*, the first sound movie (1927), and *The Jazz Singer*, the first talkie (1927). He had contracts at major studios MGM, Warner Brothers and 20th Century Fox and worked with noted directors Raoul Walsh, Sam Wood, and Fred Niblo.

In addition to his career in set decoration, art direction, and costume design and lighting, Carre was also a successful painter, with his first outdoor sketch hanging in Paris's Musee de Montmartre. Based on Carre's contribution to the film industry and his productive art career, the Commission finds that Carre rises to the level of an historic personage.

The Benjamin Carre Residence is highly intact and retains a high level of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Furthermore, the subject property is not "a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age." This is the only building designed by Benjamin Carre and he does not rise to the level of master designer or architect. His prominence was in set designing and painting, not architecture.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT ("CEQA") FINDINGS

State of California CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 "*consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.*"

State of California CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 "*consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic buildings.*"

The designation of Benjamin Carre Residence as a Historic-Cultural Monument in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 1, of The City of Los Angeles Administrative Code ("LAAC") will ensure that future construction activities involving the subject property are regulated in accordance with Section 22.171.14 of the LAAC. The purpose of the designation is to prevent significant impacts to a Historic-Cultural Monument through the application of the standards set forth in the LAAC. Without the regulation imposed by way of the pending designation, the historic significance and integrity of the subject property could be lost through incompatible alterations and new construction and the demolition of an irreplaceable historic site/open space. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are expressly incorporated into the LAAC and provide standards concerning the historically appropriate construction activities which will ensure the continued preservation of the subject property.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 8 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals of maintaining, restoring, enhancing, and protecting the environment through the imposition of regulations designed to prevent the degradation of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 31 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals relating to the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction of historic buildings and sites in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Categorical Exemption ENV-2018-803-CE was prepared on April 12, 2018.